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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

Having lived in the Northeast all of my life, it's hard to imagine a hurricane that hits the east coast to have little effect on us up here. But that's apparently the case with the one this week. I hope everyone rode the storm out well, with little adverse effects. Just imagine had this storm stayed as powerful as it started!

Speaking of hurricanes, it seems like one is rolling through my workplace lately. Every year at about this time, budget woes take over and the "insanity" accompanies it. Nerves are frayed all over the place, and highly visible. Like a hurricane, people are told to just ride the storm out and it will pass. Easily said, difficult to do when facing those rising tides on the coastline! And on top of all of this, we all still have to perform our many tasks with the typical every day stresses. Not a fun time of the year!

I really don't want to bore you this week with my issues any more than I already have! All of us has our share, for sure. There are also a number of topics in this week's issue that deserve some kind of comment, but I'm going to bow from that as well - sometimes it just seems pointless to discuss some of the absurdities that we read about these days. It almost makes reading entertainment news like the "Bennifer" fiasco a welcomed treat! Okay, so not even almost!!

Until next time...

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Steem 2.6

Hello,

Steem Engine:
<http://www.blimey.strayduck.com/>

12th September 2003,

Surprisingly Steem v2.5 didn't contain any major bugs but there were quite a few minor ones, those have been fixed in this new version.

Emulation Bugs

- . Improved accurate disk access time emulation
- . Improved high frequency PSG envelope emulation (Auto 408 Menu)
- . Changed length of floppy disk tracks (North and South)
- . Improved PSG register write emulation (The Toyottes)
- . Fixed hard drive quit with monitor running freeze up bug
- . Fixed hard drive wildcard bugs
- . Added hack for more programs affected by IKBD reset

Other Bugs

- . XSTEEM: Fixed uppercase disk manager extension bug
- . Fixed bordered monochrome to bordered colour when loading snapshot crash
- . Fixed change CPU speed when stopped freeze
- . Fixed r/l control/alt disable bug
- . Speeded up complex drawing under some drawing modes
- . Fixed returning from fullscreen bugs that affected some video cards
- . Stopped the auto-updater from crashing so much
- . DEBUG: Toggle breakpoint in history doesn't make a mess any more

New Features

- . 14Mb memory option
- . Automatic extraction of files from archives to ST hard drive
- . Added script to disk imager for Linux users

Best regards,
Paul CAILLET

New Screenshots of HighWire

Recently there have been a lot of work put into the caching capabilities in HighWire, something that has now made it possible to look into support for online graphics. As a result of this, the need for jpg/png support also has become evident and hence the appropriate libraries have been ported and added to the HighWire sources.

The experimental builds are now able to view online graphics, be it GIF, JPG or PNG, and to give you a little demonstration of this we have now uploaded 3 new screenshots to the HighWire website.

You might also notice that HighWire has been given dithering capabilities too, resulting in surprisingly nice results. Finally, you should be aware that there are no guarantees that all of the above mentioned features will be present in the next public release, although that is obviously the aim.

HighWire website: <http://highwire.atari-users.net>

/Joakim

=~::~~==

PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. It's been yet another hectic week. It's been crazy for quite a while now, but this past week has just been plain INSANE.

While Isabel stomps around on North Carolina and Virginia, up here in the North East, we are getting away with just some higher-than-average winds and some rain. We tend to get a whopper of a storm every so-often in this area, but we've been lucky so far this year. I've lived through one or two "direct hits", but I don't think that they were the size of Isabel. This storm is simply huge! If we could somehow harness the raw energy of this one storm, we'd be set for quite a while. Mother Nature constantly amazes me with her ability to conjure up titanic forces from nothing more than sea, air, and sunshine. There's probably a lesson (or at least a moral) in there somewhere, but I'm too damned tired to figure out what it is. Or maybe we just really don't know what question to ask. My grandmother used to tell me that it's easy to give an answer... that's just knowledge... but knowing what question to ask... THAT'S intelligence.

I used to think that this was just my grandmother's way of NOT answering a question, but now I think that she may have been on to something. After all, all the answers are here already. We just have to be smart enough to know which questions to ask. Some of us seem to take the wrong avenue when asking questions. They'll ask and ask and ask the same question over and over again, as if repetition alone will change things. But quite honestly, I've never seen that work... and I'll bet that you haven't either. Sometimes, it's like... trying to reason with hurricane season.
<grin>

Well, let's get on with the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

>From the comp.sys.atari.st Newsgroup
=====

David Galvez asks about adding accent marks to text:

"I'm looking for a tool to use accents with my atari text editors, mailers, etc..

If it is possible, some software clean coded that doesn't give problems under a Multitasking OS."

Derryck Croker answers:

"SMAK (Send Me A Key) from <http://www.Diedering.de>

It works 100%."

Dan Hall asks about recording with Cubase on a 1040:

"I need some help, I hope someone can point me in the right direction. Have recently purchased an old Atari 1040, but have no idea how to get cubase to work on it. It is to be part of a simple home studio. If anyone knows what a dongle is and how to get hold of one for this machine, that would be great.

I placed this question on a music makers group and the answers were very very funny, but not that helpful until one guy suggested finding this group. So here I am and would be grateful for any help and advice that you could give me."

Barrie at Keychange tells Dan that he can acquire a dongle at...

"www.keychange.co.uk"

And as far as the funny posts are concerned, Barrie tells Dan:

"Post a few, we could do with a laugh....."

Dan obliges:

"This was one that made me laugh out loud, the ignorance and ego of some people is incredible. I have not copied the guys email to "protect" him and quite frankly his opinion is so blinkered that he isn't worth bothering with. You ask for help and get this? Sad really.

```
>> Okay.. listen closely,, here's what you need to do with the Atari 1040
>> I guarantee this will resolve all your problems..
>>
>> 1) Place Atari 1040 directly in front of the right rear tire of your
car
>> (unless you have posi-track then you can use left or right)
>> 2) Start the car
>> 3) Select 'D' for Drive
>> 4) Press accelerator (just for 1 second) then apply brake
>> 5) Now select 'R'
>> 6) Press accelerator for 1 second and again apply brake
>> 7) Repeat steps 3 to 6 at least three times.
>> 8) Grab the broom out of the garage and sweep remains into large green
>> plastic bag. (urinating on them first is optional, I'll leave that up
to you
>> to decide)
>>
>> Your Atari 1040 should now be prepared for modern PC based
```

recording...In
>> the trash can where it should have gone 10 years ago !!.
>>
>> If you paid more than the value of a pack of matches for this 1040,,,,
then
>> you've just been ripped off.. "

Greg Goodwin tells Dan:

"A dongle is the equivalent of a physical key (such as the one you use to start your car). A little smaller than a deck of playing cards, the dongle contains a small amount of code and is attached to one of the ports of your computer. To run the program, the dongle must be attached.

Cubase was a program that used a dongle, and it should have been included with your copy. I'd contact the person from whom you purchased it to see what happened."

Charles Stanley asks about his favorite word processor:

"Is no-one else using 'Protext' word processor? I see many references to Word or Papyrus etc, with complaints about many bugs. Protext has very few bugs. Though not officially supported, there is an URL where an updated version is available (6.xx), which I have mislaid, unfortunately.

Protext was the preferred prog for journos. The prog is still able to produce properly printed manuals.

Protext was available only for Atari, Amiga and PC, I believe."

Steve Sweet tells Charles:

"Blimey, I spent a fortune on that and found a few bugs on them beasties, and also had a few scraps with the authors when they expected me to pay for upgrades that fixed the bugs I found on their behalf.

I must dig it all out and try to get some money back on them one day!

I had Protext first of all and imported its docs into Papyrus when I got it until I'd set up all my standard letters and forms for Papyrus."

Christian Potzinger asks about hooking a ZIP drive up to his Atari:

"Is it possible to connect a Iomega ZipDrive, 100MB-SCSI, with an Atari 520ST? "

Steve Sweet tells Christian:

"It is possible, you'd need something like a 'Link' and somehow of providing TrmPwr to the SCSI device. One way to do this is to chain in a SCSI hard drive with the trmpwr link enabled, There are mod's available to adapt the ZIP drive to provide its own TRMPWR, maybe a google search will yield that info if someone doesn't pop along with it in a few mo's. You'll also need hard disk driver software."

Karsten Ludersen adds:

"Yes it is, with a adapter for the ACSI-Port. Unfortunately I have forgotten the name of the adapter (something like "the link") and I don't know if it still is available anywhere."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Most Teens Play Violent Video Games!
 " Intellivision Direct to TV

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News      -   The Latest Gaming News!
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Most Teens Play Violent Video Games, Study Says

More than 70 percent of American teenage boys have played the violent but popular "Grand Theft Auto" video games, and they are more likely to have been in a fight than those who have not played, according to a new Gallup company poll released on Tuesday.

Although the study showed twice as many boys who had played the criminal adventure game reported having been in a fight in the last year, the survey's authors cautioned that did not prove a link between game violence and real-life behavior.

The Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing found in an online survey of 517 teenagers aged 13 to 17 conducted in August that 71 percent of boys in that age group have played "GTA," along with 34 percent of girls.

"Grand Theft Auto 3" was the best-selling video game of 2001, and "Grand Theft Auto: Vice City" topped the charts in 2002. They have been decried by parents and lawmakers, among others, for depictions of graphic violence against women, law enforcement officers and the elderly.

Both games, published by Take-Two Interactive Software Inc., carry "Mature" ratings from the Entertainment Software Rating Board, meaning

The game systems were designed and manufactured by Techno Source Ltd. The Intellivision games were ported to the systems by the company's programmers. Adapting to the systems required some games to be modified, but the programmers worked with the original source code to keep them as

close as possible to the look and feel of the classic games. Blue Sky Rangers Keith Robinson (TRON Solar Sailer) and Stephen Roney (Space Spartans, B-17 Bomber) consulted on the porting of the games.

"While we think the longtime Intellivision fans will get a kick out of these, they are really aimed at introducing a new generation to these fun, addictive games," says Robinson. "We've always felt that the real strength of Intellivision isn't nostalgia, but the timeless, high-quality game play."

Reflecting this, the look of the controllers and packaging is contemporary, aimed at young, active gamers. Early marketing response has been enthusiastic; a heavy television ad campaign is planned for Europe.

Intellivision 10 and Intellivision 25 will be on the shelves in some countries, including England and Italy, as early as mid-July. In other countries it will be available after the beginning of the new year. In the United States, it should begin appearing in stores around mid-August.

Games on Intellivision 10

- * Astrosmash
- * Baseball
- * Football
- * Motocross
- * Night Stalker
- * Shark! Shark!
- * Skiing
- * Snafu
- * Space Armada
- * Star Strike

Games on Intellivision 25

- * Astrosmash
- * Baseball
- * Basketball
- * Buzz Bombers
- * Football
- * Golf
- * Hockey
- * Hover Force
- * Motocross
- * Night Stalker
- * Pinball
- * Shark! Shark!
- * Skiing
- * Snafu
- * Space Armada
- * Space Battle
- * Space Hawk
- * Star Strike
- * Sub Hunt
- * Thin Ice
- * Thunder Castle
- * Tower of Doom
- * Vectron
- * Volleyball
- * Wrestling

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Verizon, Record Companies Duel Over 'Net Piracy

A legal battle over Internet privacy intensified today as Verizon Corp. urged a panel of federal judges to overturn a lower-court decision that required the company to hand over the names of its customers to the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

The RIAA is employing special subpoena power granted in a controversial 1998 copyright law to force Internet service providers like Verizon to reveal the identities of thousands of Internet subscribers suspected of illegally trading music online. Earlier this month, the RIAA sued 261 of those subscribers - most of them ordinary Internet users - for copyright infringement.

For the recording industry, the subpoenas have proven the most effective weapon in its war against music piracy. But ISPs and civil liberties advocates say the subpoenas are unconstitutional and pose a grave threat to the already precarious privacy protections Americans enjoy online.

"If this decision is not overturned by the courts or fixed by Congress, this could undermine users' confidence in the privacy of their Internet communications," Verizon Associate General Counsel Sarah Deutsch said. That in turn could retard consumer interest in broadband - something the federal government has expressly sought to boost, Deutsch added.

The stakes are just as high for record companies and their allies in the entertainment and software industries that are convinced online piracy is a serious threat to their very existence.

"The case is critical because being able to identify the actual infringers is the linchpin of being able to do anything to protect our [songs] online," RIAA President Cary Sherman said after today's hearing.

Last year, the RIAA subpoenaed Verizon to learn the name of an Internet user suspected of using his Verizon broadband account to "share" thousands of songs online. The RIAA invoked a passage of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 (DMCA) that permits copyright owners to directly subpoena Internet service providers to learn the identities of suspected copyright thieves on their networks.

The 1998 law allows copyright owners to request the subpoenas directly from a court clerk without seeking a judge's approval. ISPs must respond to the requests within 10 days, whether or not they're able to contact the customer whose identity is being sought.

Verizon challenged the subpoena, arguing that the recording industry's demands violated the Verizon customer's constitutional privacy rights and

that the RIAA was improperly interpreting the subpoena powers granted under the DMCA.

In a January ruling, U.S. District Court Judge John Bates rejected Verizon's arguments, and in April Bates denied Verizon's request for a stay, ordering the company to comply with the RIAA subpoenas. Verizon handed over the names but continued to appeal the matter, prompting today's hearing before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

In a lively hearing that stretched a little over an hour, the three judges interjected often, grilling attorneys for both sides about their sharply divergent stances. Both the judges and the attorneys focused more on their conflicting interpretations of the 1998 copyright law than on the constitutional issues in the case.

The DMCA was written prior to the launch of Napster in 1999 and was never intended to give copyright owners free access to the identities of ordinary Internet customers who use file-sharing services, said Andrew McBride, who argued the case on behalf of Verizon.

Although Congress made a clear distinction between copyrighted material that an ISP hosts (in the form of a Web site or page) and material that simply passes through an ISP's network (like Internet traffic), the RIAA is improperly trying to expand the law to cover material ISPs have no control over, McBride argued.

"Congress did not want to turn ISPs into Internet police," Verizon's Deutsch said.

Don Verrilli, who argued on behalf of RIAA, said Congress knew exactly what it was doing when it created the subpoena power. He said lawmakers understood that copyright owners were "on the precipice" of a massive surge in copyright infringement, fueled by new digital technologies. Thus they wrote a law to provide copyright holders with the appropriate tools to track down the digital thieves who are stealing their works.

"The only one who can tell us who they [music pirates] are is the service provider," Verrilli said.

A victory for the RIAA would validate the legal offensive that has become the centerpiece of the group's war against file sharing.

The immediate effect of a victory wouldn't be as profound for Verizon, which stands to directly gain or lose only the money and manpower required to process subpoenas from copyright owners. The long-term effects, however, for Verizon and other ISPs, could reach very deep, Public Knowledge President Gigi Sohn said.

"I think people have a level of trust" that phone companies aren't releasing their personal information, Sohn said. "This is critical currency for the phone companies." Customers could quickly lose faith in their communications carriers if they feel their personal data is being put up for grabs to anybody who owns a copyright, Sohn said.

The three-judge panel has not said when it will issue its opinion, though a decision this fall is probable. Either side would likely appeal an unfavorable decision to the full D.C. circuit and on to the Supreme Court.

Grokster, Morpheus File Briefs in Song-Swap Appeal

Two file-sharing services on Wednesday filed responses to a closely-watched appeal by film and music studios of a court ruling that found the services were not liable for massive copyright infringement.

"The appeal is just one of several assaults that we face from the Recording Industry Association of America" (RIAA), said Michael Weiss, chief executive of Streamcast Networks Inc, the developer of the popular Morpheus peer-to-peer software, which filed its brief in response to the appeal.

Both Morpheus and Grokster, another peer-to-peer service, responded on Wednesday to the appeal filed in August with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco by the Motion Picture Association of America, the RIAA, and the National Music Publishers' Association.

Back then, the copyrights holders said U.S. District Court Judge Stephen Wilson in Los Angeles in April had dramatically departed from well-established copyright law when he ruled the file-sharing services should not be closed because they cannot control what songs are traded over their systems.

"The plaintiff's seem to think that Judge Wilson's decision was a typo," said Wayne Rosso, president of Grokster.

"They also seem to want to outlaw any legal technology that is content neutral," he said.

Wilson's ruling was the industries' first major setback in their ongoing anti-piracy efforts. Last week, the recording industry took the unprecedented step of suing 261 individuals for allegedly copying songs without permission, sparking waves of criticism from peer-to-peer and privacy advocates.

The RIAA, which represents record labels like AOL Time Warner's Warner Music and Vivendi Universal's Universal Music Group, plans to file more suits and is also in settlement talks with several of the individuals.

It reached its first settlement last week with the mother of a 12-year-old girl targeted for song-swapping.

"Instead of asking the court to deputize every technology vendor to enforce their copyrights for them, they should license the technology at a fair price," Rosso said.

"Five bucks a month from each of 60 million filesharers beats the hell out of filing a federal case to get \$2,000 from a 12-year-old girl," he said.

The RIAA has said these businesses were built for the exclusive reason of illegally exchanging copyrighted works and that the court of appeals should hold them accountable.

The RIAA succeeded in legally shutting down song-swap pioneer Napster and other networks, but millions still copy billions of songs, movies and other files from each others' computers each month, according to industry estimates.

The industry blames much of its steep slide in revenues since 1999 on online piracy.

Weiss of Streamcast said his company expects to prevail. If not, they will take it to the Supreme Court, he said.

New Bill Could Aid Music File Sharers

A bill has been introduced in the U.S. Senate that could significantly curtail the Recording Industry Association of America's recent - and quite successful - offensive against individuals who share music files over the Internet. If passed, the legislation would end the RIAA's flood of subpoenas to Internet service providers demanding the identities of their customers who use such online file-sharing services as Morpheus and Kazaa.

Introduced by Senator Sam Brownback (R-Kansas), the "Consumers, Schools, and Libraries Digital Rights Management (DRM) Awareness Act of 2003" would prevent copyright holders from compelling an ISP to disclose the names or other identifying information of its subscribers prior to the filing of a suit - a tactic that critics and civil libertarians decry as unconstitutional and an invasion of privacy.

This issue has been hashed out in court and, in fact, is being reviewed again as Verizon argues before a panel of federal judges that the lower-court decision that required it to turn over its customers' names was incorrect. That decision acknowledged the right of the RIAA to subpoena Verizon for the identity of an Internet user thought to be using Verizon broadband to post thousands of songs online. The RIAA based its argument on a provision contained in 1998's Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

The bill would not give ISPs a Hail Mary pass, though it does come close.

"Senator Brownback's bill ensures adequate court oversight is in place before copyright holders can force ISPs to disclose the identities of Internet users," said Electronic Frontier Foundation staff attorney Wendy Seltzer.

Provisions include requirements for the "conspicuous" labeling of CDs, DVDs and software that limits consumer uses with digital-rights management" (DRM) restrictions and curtailing the Federal Communication Commission's ability to impose federal regulations on digital-television innovators.

Thus far, the RIAA's use of subpoenas has been the one action that has noticeably slowed activity on file-sharing sites. Depending on enforcement, and perhaps even more on litigation filed, the bill would slow - but not necessarily halt completely - the RIAA's attention-getting strategy.

Of course, this is a moot point if the bill does not become law. However, there is a growing consumer backlash against the RIAA, which is being felt in Congress, Mike McGuire, Media Research Director for GartnerG2 told NewsFactor.

"Ultimately, this issue could have some serious political implications for the music industry - especially if enough people get upset at the sight of grandparents losing their house because their grandkids used their computers to download music," he said.

"These issues have by no means been settled yet," EFT staff attorney Jason Schultz told NewsFactor. "Sooner or later, Congress will have to step in

to protect consumers' rights."

Other bills making their way through Congress include those of Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon), Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-California), and Representative Rick Boucher (D-Virginia).

In separate news, StreamCast Networks, the developer of Morpheus, has filed its brief in an appeal of a court decision that the P2P networks originally hailed as a significant victory. Ruling on a suit filed by Grokster and Morpheus against 28 entertainment companies, a federal court had declared the music industry could not shut down P2P software makers for the copyright infringements of their users when the software has significant legitimate uses. The court ruled that the Morpheus software was no different from a VCR or copy machine, citing the 1984 Supreme Court decision that held that Sony was not responsible for copyright infringement by Betamax VCR users.

The entertainment companies have appealed the case to the federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. The court has not yet scheduled oral argument on the case.

File Sharing Lawsuits Scared Few Users Away

Use of the most popular Internet file-sharing service declined only 5 percent last week despite a high-profile crackdown by the U.S. recording industry on unauthorized music trading online, the latest data shows.

Around 4.23 million U.S. home users logged onto the KaZaa service, down from 4.47 million the week before, Internet researcher Nielsen//Netratings told Reuters on Friday. Usage on three other popular file-sharing services - Morpheus, iMesh, and BearShare, stayed about the same from the previous week.

Since the Recording Industry of America began its campaign against the file sharing services in late June, the popularity of the online services has been sharply reduced. KaZaa has lost more than 40 percent of its more than 7 million users it had at the start of June, according to Nielsen//Netratings.

The recording industry's long-term goal is to move users of services like KaZaa to industry-sanctioned services such as Apple's iTunes site, which charges users a fee for downloading music, a spokesman said.

"This is a long-term campaign and we're going to continue until the message gets out," RIAA spokesman Jonathan Lamy said. "We're not so much interested in the day-to-day tick-tock."

House Backs Making Internet Tax Ban Permanent

The U.S. House of Representatives voted on Wednesday to make permanent a ban on Internet use taxes and to require nine states to repeal existing taxes on access fees.

By a voice vote lawmakers agreed to a bill cementing the moratorium on

Internet access and traffic taxes due to expire in November, and removing a provision that had allowed a handful of states to levy taxes that were in place before the ban was first passed in 1998.

The tax ban would apply to all methods of Internet access, including pricier high-speed links taxed by some states.

However, the ban would not apply to online sales taxes, which are already prohibited under a Supreme Court decision unless the retailer has a substantial in-state presence.

The legislation passed by the House is slightly different from the Internet use tax bill being considered by the Senate. Lawmakers in both chambers said the Senate would probably pass its bill within the next several weeks.

The bill's author, Republican Rep. Christopher Cox of California, predicted it would be "short work" for House and Senate negotiators to reach a compromise between the two bills.

Supporters said the permanent tax ban would remove a cloud of uncertainty from the future of Internet commerce.

"Failure to make the moratorium permanent could result in the imposition of a complex web of taxes that would create uncertainty for the information technology industry, a sector of the economy which can ill afford further setbacks," said House Judiciary Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner, Republican from Wisconsin.

The bill would roll back Internet access taxes in nine states, with totals ranging from \$3.6 million and \$45 million from the tax last year, according to one estimate.

The nine states are New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

Democratic Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee, of Texas complained the measure would deprive states of much-needed revenue.

But other members said the loss of revenue is overshadowed by the benefits to emerging e-commerce.

"Although this bill will necessarily result in the loss or potential loss of revenue to some states, it will promote the continued development, emergence and widespread access to the Internet. And it will do so in a fair and technologically neutral manner," said Rep. Melvin Watt, a Democrat from North Carolina.

Self-Policing Added to Spam Bill

One of the primary bills in Congress to crack down on spam e-mail contains a new provision that would shield bulk e-mailers from penalties if they agree to police themselves, raising new questions about the extent to which industry is influencing the legislation.

According to a revised draft of a bill being circulated to members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, bulk mailers could form a self-regulatory group that would maintain anti-spam standards of conduct

similar to those in the bill. Any member of the organization - which would have to be approved by the Federal Trade Commission - would be exempt from legal penalties that otherwise would apply to nonmembers.

The idea of a self-governing organization has been supported by several of the big Internet e-mail account providers, most particularly Microsoft Corp. The theory is that the group would employ an independent third party that could issue an electronic seal of approval for "legitimate" senders of commercial e-mail, thereby making it easier for computer users to filter out mail from unsavory or fraudulent spammers.

Microsoft has been working with America Online Inc., Yahoo Inc. and EarthLink Inc., all of which market to their members, on such a system.

"It's certainly something we've pushed for," said Microsoft spokesman Sean Sundwall, though he declined to say whether the company had any direct conversations with the bill's sponsors. The direct-marketing industry already has a similar program in place for its members. Representatives of the Direct Marketing Association did not return calls for comment.

But some consumer groups, anti-spam organizations, state prosecutors and legislators were taken aback by the idea of making it law by adding it to a bill sponsored by Reps. Richard Burr (R-N.C.), W.J. "Billy" Tauzin (R-La.) and F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. (R-Wis.).

"They are writing the law so that it places them where they think they belong: above it," said Jason Catlett, head of Junkbusters Inc., an anti-spam group

Ken Johnson, a Tauzin spokesman, responded that the self-regulation plan improves the bill because it creates a grievance process for individual consumers who might otherwise have trouble getting the attention of law enforcement authorities when marketers are continuing to target them.

"The FTC does not have the resources to pursue individual, minor complaints," Johnson said. The proposal establishes a complaint mechanism that the self-policing group must follow.

The new provision is the latest twist for the bill, which is likely to be the major piece of spam legislation to emerge from the House because of the sponsors' powerful positions: Sensenbrenner is the chairman of the Judiciary Committee; Tauzin, of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Revelations in May that lobbyists from the marketing, retailing and Internet provider industries played a key role in drafting the original bill forced its sponsors to reshape it after it was criticized as being weak.

Since then, negotiations have been ongoing with legislators who want a tougher bill, led in part by Rep. Heather A. Wilson (R-N.M.), who has a competing bill that has the bipartisan co-sponsorship of 67 representatives.

Congressional negotiators had been finding some common ground, sources said, adding a Wilson-backed provision that requires the labeling of pornographic content in e-mail. But the inclusion of the self-regulation idea has undermined that progress and put the bill in "purgatory," according to one congressional staffer.

"It's a step backward," said a Wilson spokesperson. "It continues to protect spammers at the expense of consumers."

The bill requires bulk mailers to honor consumer requests to stop receiving unsolicited e-mail and makes it illegal for spammers to disguise their whereabouts. It also makes illegal the practice of electronic "harvesting" of e-mail addresses, in which special software is used to find e-mail addresses on Web pages, copy them and add them to bulk mailing lists.

Even before the addition of the self-regulation provision, anti-spam activists said the bill was full of loopholes. Some consumer groups and state lawmakers are especially concerned that the bill would supplant stronger state anti-spam laws and prevent individual consumers from suing spammers. Supporters argue that federal rules are the only way to ensure that legitimate marketers have clear rules that don't change from state to state.

In many respects, the House bill - minus the self-regulation plan - mirrors a Senate bill that has passed through committee, though it is unclear when it will be considered by the full Senate. The bill, sponsored by Conrad Burns (R-Mont.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), is supported by the marketing and Internet provider industries.

Another Senate bill, sponsored by Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), would create a national do-not-spam list similar to the recently instituted do-not-call list for telemarketers. But the FTC so far has opposed the idea, and no similar bill has been introduced in the House.

Britain Cracks Down on Spammers with New Privacy Law

Britain Thursday became the second country in Europe to criminalize spam, the unwanted barrage of e-mail and mobile phone text messages promising riches, cheap home loans and a better sex life.

The unsolicited messages, which industry groups say account for more than half of all e-mails sent, have become a time- and resource-wasting scourge of Internet users everywhere.

Under the new British law, spammers face an \$8,057 fine if convicted in a magistrates court. The fine from a jury trial would be unlimited. Spammers would not face prison, according to the new law, introduced by Communications Minister Stephen Timms Thursday.

Spam is defined under the law as any messages sent to consumers without having first established a consensual customer relationship.

"These regulations will help combat the global nuisance of unsolicited e-mails and texts by enshrining in law rights that give consumers more say over who can use their personal details," Timms said in a statement.

Britain's Office of the Information Commissioner will enforce the regulations, which go into effect on Dec. 11.

The law does not however cover workplace e-mail addresses. Anti-spam proponents had been calling for a blanket law that would criminalize all forms of spam.

The European Union passed a directive last year and Italian lawmakers this month imposed tough new regulations to fine spammers up to \$101,600 and impose a maximum prison term of three years.

UK Politicians to Join Capitol Hill Spam Debate

A team of British lawmakers will head to Washington D.C. next month to try and resolve the EU-U.S. disagreement on how to tackle the deluge of e-mail spam plaguing consumers and clogging the Internet.

"There seems to be some sort of philosophical issue here. We just want to understand why they see things differently," said British MP Derek Wyatt.

Anti-spam advocates have called for tough laws, particularly in the U.S. where most spam originates, that would entail criminal penalties to combat the flood of unsolicited e-mail messages promoting everything from pornographic Web sites to low-interest home mortgages.

By some industry estimates, spam accounts for nearly 60 percent of global e-mail. Politicians agree that anti-spam laws should be harmonized across national borders, making it easier to prosecute spammers who target in-boxes across the planet.

But the U.S. and Europe are taking different paths. At the crux of the matter is the issue of consent. An EU anti-spam directive calls for an "opt-in" approach, which means a company must first obtain a user's permission before sending a message.

U.S. politicians have devised more advertiser-friendly draft legislation that would place the onus on the user to stop the flow of unsolicited e-mail promotions. Until the user requests that the messages cease, a spammer could continue to send unsolicited e-mail.

A series of anti-spam bills are under consideration on Capital Hill at the moment.

Anti-spam advocates say the so-called "opt-out" rule favored by American lawmakers shields unscrupulous spammers, who can mask their identity and send e-mails with impunity.

Wyatt said he and Andrew Pinder, Prime Minister Tony Blair's appointed e-envoy, are scheduled to appear before a Congressional hearing in October, at which they will urge U.S. lawmakers to adopt a tough anti-spam law that more closely reflects recent European legislation.

"Of course this is the sort of discussion we intend to have. Otherwise, what's the point of going," Wyatt said.

Wyatt, chairman of the Associate Party Internet Group, a coalition of UK lawmakers that have pushed for Internet reforms, said members of the group will meet with American congressmen, senators, officials from the Federal Trade Commission and business executives in a three-day tour between October 14-16.

International negotiations have begun on how and whether to manage the Internet, along with associated problems such as junk e-mail and pornography.

Organizers said a two-week meeting, which began this week, aims to narrow differences among countries ahead of the World Summit on the Information Society in mid-December.

The summit, organized by the United Nations' International Telecommunication Union, seeks common policy on using information technology to create greater prosperity.

The current plan includes protecting minors from harmful content and assuring confidentiality of personal information, while addressing unsolicited e-mail, known as spam.

Wolfgang Kleinwaechter, a communications professor from Denmark's Aarhus University, said many users are concerned that governments will impose regulations that will stifle freedom of the Internet.

Kleinwaechter, one of the meeting's "civil society" representatives, said controls should stem from the users, not governments.

New E-Mail Worm Targets Hole in Internet Explorer

Anti-virus companies warned on Thursday of a new computer worm circulating through e-mail that purports to be security software from Microsoft Corp. but actually tries to disable security programs that are already running.

The worm, dubbed "Sven" or "Gibe," takes advantage of a two-year-old hole in Internet Explorer and affects systems that have not installed a patch for that security hole, according to Internet security company Network Associates Inc..

The malicious program arrives as an attachment to an e-mail pretending to contain a patch for holes in Internet Explorer, Outlook and Outlook Express and then mails itself off to addresses located on the victim's computer.

The worm also can spread over Internet relay chat and the KaZaa peer-to-peer network, as well as copy itself over shared networks, Network Associates said.

When it infects a computer it alerts a Web site that appears to be counting the infections, according to Symantec Corp., another Internet security outfit. The number of the counter was near 760,000 by Thursday afternoon.

Network Associates rated the worm a low risk for corporate users and a medium risk for home users. The company and rival Symantec, among others, were offering anti-virus updates that detects and removes the worm.

Microsoft has cautioned customers in the past against e-mail software updates, saying it does not distribute patches that way but rather directs them to its Web site.

N.C. Jury Clears HP in Printer Lawsuit

A state jury determined that Hewlett-Packard Co. did not try to fool consumers into believing ink cartridges packed with its printers were full.

Similar class-action lawsuits have been filed in 34 states. In the first to go to trial, jurors deliberated for 2 1/2 hours Thursday before rejecting the lawsuit brought by a Chapel Hill man who claimed the company cheated customers by selling half-filled inkjet cartridges.

Plaintiffs' attorneys accused the Palo Alto, Calif.-based computer maker of a scheme that would force consumers to buy replacement cartridges sooner. The lawsuit sought \$11.5 million in damages on behalf of 223,706 North Carolinians who bought HP printers between Aug. 1, 1998, and Nov. 30, 2000.

The printer packaging did not mention the actual volume of ink included in the starter cartridges. But attorneys for Hewlett-Packard showed the jury brochures and packages that came inside the printer box that indicated the "economy" cartridges contained half the ink.

"HP is pleased with the decision and is confident that it will succeed on the merits in other states with copycat lawsuits on the same grounds," HP spokeswoman Rebeca Robboy said.

HP, which no longer sells economy cartridges, sold three out of every five printers in the United States last year. Although the company is the top seller of notebook computers and servers, profit from printers and peripheral equipment, such as ink, frequently surpass HP's overall quarterly profit.

The Orange County jury found that HP disclosed adequate information about the cartridges enclosed with the printers, and that consumers did not have expectations that something else would be included.

During closing statements on Thursday, plaintiff's attorney Richard McCune said since consumers only received half-filled cartridges, the true price of the printers was \$20 to \$40 higher than was advertised, depending on whether the printer contained one or two cartridges.

Bob Cooper, representing Hewlett-Packard, told jurors that HP was responding to competition by lowering the prices of its printers and including economy cartridges in the printer's box.

Computer Makers Sued Over Hard-Drive Size Claims

A group of computer owners has filed a lawsuit against some of the world's biggest makers of personal computers, claiming that their advertising deceptively overstates the true capacity of their hard drives.

The lawsuit, which seeks class action status, was filed earlier this week in Los Angeles Superior Court against Apple Computer Inc., Dell Inc., Gateway Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co., IBM, Sharp Corp., Sony Corp. and Toshiba Corp.

The lawsuit brought by Los Angeles residents Lanchau Dan, Adam Selkowitz, Tim Swan and John Zahabian centers around the way that computer hard drives are described by manufacturers.

Representatives of the eight defendants were not immediately available to comment.

According to the lawsuit, computer hard drive capacities are described in promotional material in decimal notation, but the computer reads and writes data to the drives in a binary system.

The result is that a hard drive described as being 20 gigabytes would actually have only 18.6 gigabytes of readable capacity, the lawsuit said.

The plaintiffs said this difference in convention is deceptive and leaves buyers with less storage than they thought they were getting when they purchased their computers.

For example, when a consumer buys what he thinks is a 150 gigabyte hard drive, the plaintiffs said, he actually gets only 140 gigabytes of storage space. That missing 10 gigabytes, they claim, could store an extra 2,000 digitized songs or 20,000 pictures.

The lawsuit asks for an injunction against the purportedly unfair marketing practices, an order requiring the defendants to disclose their practices to the public, restitution, disgorgement of ill-gotten profits and attorneys' fees.

Developer Moves to Neutralize Web Helper

The developer of software that essentially guides Web surfers sought Tuesday to neutralize a controversial service designed to help users who mistype Internet addresses.

The Internet Software Consortium, the nonprofit organization that develops BIND software for Internet domain name directories, is writing an "urgent patch" for Internet service providers and others who want to block customers from a new Site Finder service from VeriSign Inc.

VeriSign, which keeps the master lists of names ending in ".com" and ".net," launched Site Finder on Monday to steer users to likely alternatives when they type addresses for which no Web site exists.

Though VeriSign gets unspecified revenues from search engine partners whose technology powers Site Finder, company officials described the service as primarily a navigation tool to help lost Internet users.

Critics, however, say the service eliminates user choice, gives a private company too much control over online commerce and could violate longstanding Internet standards.

VeriSign's service, which affects only ".com" and ".net" names, also overrode similar services offered by several Internet service providers, including America Online, and through Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer browser.

The BIND patch allows AOL and others to restore control by identifying and

then ignoring data from Site Finder, said Paul Vixie, president of the Internet Software Consortium.

When the patched software receives such data, it will instead pass along an "address not found" message.

"We're making this patch available because our customers are screaming for it," Vixie said.

Though running the software update is optional, Vixie expects many customers will. The consortium was testing the patch Tuesday and planned to release it by Wednesday.

VeriSign spokesman Brian O'Shaughnessy said Tuesday that individual service providers were free to configure their systems so customers would bypass Site Finder. But he questioned whether releasing a patch to do so would violate Internet standards.

Vixie acknowledged that it could - standards call for operators like VeriSign to have complete control over their directories - but he said not releasing a patch would create greater chaos.

BIND, a free product, is used by most domain name servers at service providers, corporations and other networks. Typically, those servers keep temporary copies of the master directories obtained from VeriSign.

VeriSign estimates that people mistype ".com" and ".net" names some 20 million times daily and cites internal studies showing users prefer navigational help over a generic error message.

Earlier this year, a suburban Washington company called Paxfire Inc. tested a similar service for ".biz" and ".us" names, but the U.S. government and a private oversight board asked Paxfire to suspend it after a few weeks pending a review, Paxfire chairman Mark Lewyn said.

A similar feature exists with ".museum" names. People who type in nonexistent addresses are offered an index of museum sites.

'Phisher' Pleads Guilty, Faces Jail

A Chicago man has pleaded guilty to wire fraud in connection with a scheme that used a phony Web site to steal credit card and account information from customers of Microsoft's MSN Internet service.

The plea agreement is the latest salvo in the government's stepped-up efforts against identity theft and so-called phisher Web sites. Such sites mimic legitimate Web sites and trick unsuspecting Internet users into divulging sensitive personal and financial information.

As part of a plea agreement, 21-year-old Matthew Thomas Guevara acknowledged that he set up a Web site, www.msnbilling.com, that was designed to harvest personal financial and account information. Guevara then sent e-mail from Hotmail accounts to MSN customers asking them to visit the site and update their MSN account information, according to a statement Friday from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Account and credit card information provided through msnbilling.com was

actually forwarded to one of the e-mail accounts Guevara set up, the DOJ says.

Guevara will be sentenced on December 5 by a federal judge in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington in Seattle. He faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000, the DOJ says.

The plea agreement comes amid increased attention from law enforcement to the threat of online identity theft.

In July, the FBI and ISP EarthLink issued a joint statement that warned consumers about an increase in phisher Web sites.

One month later, Atlanta-based EarthLink announced that it is suing a Vancouver spam ring. EarthLink alleges the spammers were using EarthLink e-mail accounts to support a phisher site targeted at America Online members.

The FBI reports a "steady increase" in complaints to its Internet Fraud Complaint Center about the phony Web sites. The Federal Trade Commission said that identity theft has been the number one consumer complaint reported to the agency for the last three years.

No More 'AOL' for Time Warner

AOL Time Warner plans to drop "AOL" from its name, symbolizing the giant media company's effort to put the failings of the biggest merger in history behind it and begin a new phase of its corporate identity, company executives said yesterday.

The corporation's board of directors is scheduled to approve the name change at its monthly meeting in New York tomorrow, people close to the board said. Richard D. Parsons, chairman and chief executive, strongly supports the change and intends to move quickly to implement it. The company's logo will be changed and its stock-ticker symbol will revert to "TWX," which Time Warner used before its \$112 billion merger with America Online in January 2001.

America Online Inc. was flying high when the Dulles-based firm co-founded by Steve Case bought venerable Time Warner with what turned out to be vastly inflated stock. But Case has been ousted, America Online is a mere division of a media behemoth, and the online unit is struggling to keep subscribers, many of whom have abandoned AOL dial-up service in favor of faster Internet connections provided by cable television and telephone companies.

The decision to drop "AOL" from the corporate name is not a precursor to a sale or spinoff of the America Online division, sources said. It also is not a sign that the company is close to settling an ongoing investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission into accounting problems at AOL, before and after the merger, that artificially boosted revenue and profit, sources said.

Despite its core business problems, America Online continues to generate more than \$1 billion a year in cash, making it of great value to Parsons, who has made corporate debt reduction a top priority. The company, which was nearly \$30 billion in debt after the merger and related transactions,

has reduced debt to slightly more than \$24 billion.

Parsons has said his goal is to slash debt to \$20 billion by the end of 2004, but he is on track to reach that figure considerably sooner, sources said, because of a combination of asset sales and strong cash flow.

Yesterday, the company took another step toward improving its financial health by agreeing to sell the money-losing Atlanta Hawks basketball team and Atlanta Thrashers hockey team to an investor group that includes CNN founder Ted Turner's son-in-law, J. Rutherford Seydel II, and several Washington area business executives.

The sports teams and Atlanta's Philips Arena, which is also part of the pending deal, drained an estimated \$50 million a year in cash from the corporation. The sale, valued at \$250 million including the assumption of debt, does not include the most successful and valuable sports team owned by AOL Time Warner, the Atlanta Braves.

Time Warner partisans have called for a corporate name change for more than 18 months, since America Online's business and accounting troubles dragged down the price of the parent company's stock and depressed the value of their stock-based compensation and retirement accounts. Numerous Time Warner officials, who resented AOL from the start, have made their views about a name change known, both at an open meeting convened by Parsons and in private sessions.

For months, Parsons resisted changing the name, in part because he thought it would be better to resolve the SEC investigation first, and also because he did not want to take action that would be viewed by AOL division employees as punitive, according to sources familiar with Parsons's views. A number of factors led Parsons to change his mind.

First, the SEC investigation dragged on, and Parsons realized that the best thing for AOL Time Warner stockholders would be to get on with business by changing the name and letting the probe run its course, sources said. Also, the America Online brand and the corporate parent's name were confused, as newspapers, magazines and Wall Street took to calling the corporation "AOL."

Senior corporate officials devised a maneuver to bring about the name change in a noncontroversial manner, just as Parsons had made other changes since he rose to the top of the media firm that owns CNN, Time and People magazines, HBO and Time Warner cable, and the Warner Bros. and New Line Cinema movie studios.

Instead of having to order the name change, Parsons received a request for it last month from America Online chief executive Jonathan F. Miller, who stated that the confusion over "AOL" as both the online division's name and an abbreviation for the corporate parent was hurting the brand name.

"Since the merger in early 2001, the three letters AOL have ceased to stand for the Internet and the promise it entails, and instead have become the shorthand for the world's largest media company," Miller wrote in an August memo to America Online employees. "As AOL Time Warner became known as, for all intents and purposes, 'AOL,' any controversy or criticism involving the corporate entity has actually hit our consumer brand."

Miller also gave Parsons a way to deflect internal criticism.

"I recognize fully that it would seem to many that AOL is diminished if our

corporate parent reverts to the Time Warner name," Miller wrote. "Some will think that this is a fate being forced upon us. And there is no question this will provide the media yet another opportunity to write negatively about the merger of AOL and Time Warner. But I want to emphasize that I initiated the dialogue with Dick Parsons about the name change - no one asked me to do this - because it would be the right thing for our business."

Parsons, who had said he would change the name only if there was a business reason to do so, finally had one. The company could once again tout its Time Warner brands instead of having its endeavors identified by the abbreviation for its online unit, such as when New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg spoke recently of "AOL" sponsoring a Central Park concert, for which the corporate parent is paying.

While a name change may be in order above the entrance to AOL Time Warner's current corporate home at 75 Rockefeller Plaza, no costly signs will have to be removed from the company's new headquarters, under construction at One Columbus Circle in Manhattan. That property, scheduled to be complete early next year, doesn't yet have a permanent sign.

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